CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of providing software to a user for subsequent use by a particular user device, comprising:

providing a user interface configured to allow the user to identify the particular user device;

locating the user interface in a location where the particular user device is provided to the user;

identifying the particular user device via the user interface;

accessing software specific to the particular user device;

storing the software on a computer readable medium; and

making the computer readable medium available to the user.

2. The method of claim 1, and wherein:

the particular user device is one of a plurality of different distinct user devices;

the user interface comprises a display device; and

further comprising displaying to the user via the display device a menu of the plurality of different distinct user devices from which to select the particular user device.

3. The method of claim 2, and further comprising, prior to displaying to the user the menu of different distinct user devices, displaying to the user via the display device a menu of a plurality of manufacturers of user devices from which to choose the manufacturer of the particular user device.

4. The method of claim 1, and wherein the accessing of the software is performed automatically in response to identifying the particular device.

5. The method of claim 1, and wherein the storing of the software on the computer readable medium is performed automatically in response to the accessing of the software.

6. The method of claim 1, and further comprising, prior to accessing the software, connecting to a global computer network in order to access the software.

7. The method of claim 6, and wherein:

the software for the particular user device is one of a plurality of available softwares, each of the available softwares being associated with a distinct access address on the global computer network;

the step of connecting to the global computer network comprises making a connection to the distinct access address associated with the software specific to the particular user device; and

the connection to the distinct access address is made in response to identifying the particular user device.

8. The method of claim 1, and wherein the user interface is located in a retail sales location where the particular device is offered for sale to the user.

9. The method of claim 1, and wherein the step of storing the software on a computer readable medium is performed by electronically transmitting an electronic copy of the software to a readable-writeable memory device contained within a user provided device.

10. An apparatus for providing software to a user for use by a particular user device, comprising:

a user interface configured to allow a user to select the particular user device from a plurality of user devices and to generate a user input signal in response thereto;

a communication device configured to connect to a computer network;

a computer readable medium writing device; and

a processor configured to receive the user input signal, to use the user input signal to retrieve software specific to the particular user device, and to store the software on a computer readable medium using the computer readable medium writing device.

11. The apparatus of claim 10, and wherein the processor is configured to retrieve the software from the computer network via the communication device.

12. The apparatus of claim 10, and further comprising a computer readable-writable memory device, and wherein the processor is further configured to retrieve the software from the computer network via the communication device and to store the software on the computer readable-writable memory device prior to storing the software on the computer readable medium.

13. The apparatus of claim 10, and wherein the user interface is a touch sensitive display screen and the plurality of user devices is identified to the user via the display screen.

14. The apparatus of claim 10, and wherein the computer readable medium writing device is configured to record computer readable data to a particular type of computer readable medium, to receive a plurality of the particular type of computer readable medium capable of having computer readable data recorded thereon, and to automatically record computer readable data to one of the plurality of the particular type of computer readable medium.

15. The apparatus of claim 14, and wherein the computer readable medium type is a compact disk.

16. The apparatus of claim 10, and wherein the communication network is a global communication network characterized by a plurality of web addresses, and the software is associated with a specific web address, and the processor is configured to cause the communication device to connect to the specific web address based on the user input signal.

17. The apparatus of claim 10, and further wherein the user interface comprises a display device, and the processor is configured to display to the user via the display device a plurality of user devices from which the user can select the particular user device for which the software is to be provided.

18. The apparatus of claim 10, and further comprising a communication port configured to transmit electronic data to a user-provided device comprising a readable-writeable memory device, and wherein the processor is further configured to store the software on the readable-writeable memory device.

19. A computer network system for providing software to users of a plurality of user devices, comprising:

a user station comprising a first processor, a user interface in signal communication with the first processor, a first communication device in signal communication with the first processor, a first computer readable memory device in signal communication with the first processor, and a computer readable medium writing device in signal communication with the first processor;

a first server capable of being in signal communication with the first communication device;

a software server comprising a second processor, a second communication device in signal communication with the second processor, and a second computer readable memory device in signal communication with the second processor, the second computer readable memory device containing software specific to at least some of the plurality of user devices;

a communications network configured to connect the first server and the software server in signal communication; and

wherein, the first memory device contains a series of computer executable steps configured to be executed by the first processor to offer users, via the user interface, a menu of the plurality of user devices, and, at least partially in response to receiving a signal from the user interface corresponding to selection of a particular user device, to cause the first server to connect to the software server and to retrieve from the second memory device an electronic copy of the software specific to the particular user device, and further to cause the computer readable medium writing device to record the software on a computer readable medium.

20. The computer network system of claim 19, and further comprising a plurality of users stations, each said user station having an associated first server, and wherein the communications network is configured to connect the plurality of first servers and the software server in signal communication.

21. The computer network system of claim further comprising a plurality of software servers, and wherein the series of computer executable steps is further configured to cause the first server to connect to one of the software servers in response to the first processor receiving a signal from the user interface corresponding to selection of a particular user device.

22. The computer network system of claim 19, and wherein the first memory device contains address locations of software stored on the second memory device, and wherein the processor is configured to use the memory addresses to communicate to the software server the software to transmit to the first server the software specific to the particular device.

23. The computer network system of claim 19, and wherein the user stations are located in retail stores which offer the user devices for sale.